ANTIENT and MODERN ITALY COMPARED:

Being the FIRST PART of

LIBERTY,

A

POEM.

By Mr. THOMSON. (J.) Poet

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, over-against *St. Clement's* Church in the *Strand*.
M.DCC.XXXV.

(Price One Shilling.)

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

FREDERICK,

PRINCE of WALES.

SIR,

WHEN I reflect upon that ready Condescension, that preventing Generosity, with which YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS received the following Poem under your Protection; I can alone ascribe it to the Recommendation, and Influence of the Subject. In you the Cause and Concerns of Liberty have so

zealous a Patron, as entitles whatever may have the leaſt Tendency to promote them, to the Diſtinction of your Favour. And who can entertain this delightful Reflection, without feeling a Pleaſure far ſuperior to that of the fondeſt Author; and of which all true Lovers of their Country muſt participate? To behold the nobleſt Diſpoſitions of the Prince, and of the Patriot, united: an overflowing Benevolence, Generoſity, and Candour of Heart, joined to an enlightened Zeal for Liberty, an intimate Perſuaſion that on it depends the Happineſs and Glory both of Kings and People: to ſee theſe ſhining out in Public Virtues, as they have hitherto ſmiled in all the Social Lights and Private Accompliſhments of Life, is a Proſpect that cannot but inſpire a general Sentiment of Satisfaction and Gladneſs, more eaſy to be felt than expreſſed.

If the following Attempt to trace Liberty, from the firſt Ages down to her excellent Eſtabliſhment in Great Britain, can at all merit your Ap-

pro-

probation, and prove an Entertainment to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS; if it can in any Degree anſwer the Dignity of the Subject, and of the Name under which I preſume to ſhelter it; I have my beſt Reward: particularly, as it affords me an Opportunity of declaring that I am, with the greateſt Zeal and Reſpect,

SIR,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS's

Moſt Obedient

And moſt Devoted Servant,

James Thomſon.

LIBERTY.

PART I.

O My lamented Talbot! while with Thee
The *Muſe* gay-rov'd the glad *Heſperian* Round,
And drew th' inſpiring Breath of Ancient Arts;
Ah! little thought ſhe her returning Verſe
Should ſing our Darling Subject to thy *Shade*.
And does the Myſtic Veil, from mortal Beam,

Involve thoſe Eyes where every Virtue ſmil'd,
And all the FATHER's candid Spirit ſhone?
The Light of Reaſon, pure, without a Cloud;
Full of the generous Heart, the mild Regard;
Unblemiſh'd Honour, uncorrupted Faith;
And limpid Truth, that looks the very Soul.

But to the Death of mighty Nations turn'd
My Strain, be there abſorb'd the Private Tear.

MUSING, I lay; warm from the ſacred Walks,
Where at each ſtep Imagination burns:
Ten thouſand Wonders rowling in my thought,
As the Great Scene of deathleſs deeds I tread,
Tread the bleſt Ground by more than mortals trod,
And ſee thoſe Skies that breath'd the *Roman* Soul.

Mean

Mean time wide-ſcatter'd round, awful, and hoar,
Lies a vaſt Monument once glorious *Rome*,
The Tomb of Empire! Ruins! that efface
Whate'er, of finiſh'd, modern Pomp can boaſt.
Of theſe Ideas full, repoſing Senſe
In ſlumber ſunk; and Fancy's Magic hand
Led me anew o'er all the ſolemn Scene,
Still in the Mind's pure eye more ſolemn dreſt,
When ſtrait, methought, the fair majeſtic POWER
Of LIBERTY appear'd. Not, as of old,
Extended in her hand the Cap, and Rod,
Whoſe Slave-inlarging touch gave double life:
But her bright Temples bound with *Britiſh* Oak,
And Naval Honours nodded on her Brow.
Sublime her Port. Looſe o'er her Shoulder flow'd

Her

Her ſea-green Robe, with Conſtellations gay.
An Iſland Goddeſs now; and her high care
The Queen of Iſles, the Miſtreſs of the Main.
My heart beat filial tranſport at the ſight;
And, as ſhe mov'd to ſpeak, th' awaken'd *Muſe*
Liſten'd intenſe. A while ſhe look'd around,
With mournful eye the well-known Ruins mark'd,
And then, her Sighs repreſſing, thus began.

Mine are theſe Wonders, all thou ſee'ſt is mine;
But ah how chang'd! the falling poor Remains
Of what exalted once th' *Auſonian* Shore.
Look back thro' time; and from the gloom diſclos'd,
Painting my words, behold the ſcatter'd Scene.
The Great Republick ſee! that glow'd ſublime
With the mixt Freedom of a thouſand States;

Rais'd

Rais'd on the Thrones of Kings her Curule Chair,
And by her Faſces aw'd the ſubject World.
See buſy Millions ſwarming all the Land,
With Cities throng'd, and teeming Culture high:
For on her free-born Sons then Nature ſmil'd,
And pour'd the Plenty that belongs to Men.
Behold, the Country chearing, Villas riſe,
In lively Proſpect; by the ſecret lapſe
Of Brooks now loſt, and Streams renown'd in Song:
In *Umbria*'s cloſing Vales, or on the brow
Of her brown Hills that breathe the ſcented gale:
On *Baia*'s viny coaſt; where peaceful Seas,
Fan'd by kind Zephirs, ever kiſs the ſhore;
And Suns unclouded ſhine, and pureſt Air:
Or in the ſpacious Neighbourhood of *Rome*;

Far-ſhining upwards to the *Sabine* Hills,
To *Anio*'s Roar, and *Tibur*'s Olive Shade;
To where *Preneſte* lifts her airy Brow;
Or downwards ſpreading to the ſunny ſhore,
Wav'd from the main, where *Alba* draws the Breeze.
See diſtant Mountains leave their Vallies dry,
And o'er the proud Arcade their Tribute pour,
To lave Imperial *Rome*. For ages laid
Deep, maſſy, firm, diverging every way,
From ſea to ſea, her Public Roads behold:
By various Nations trod, and ſupplant Kings;
With Legions flaming, or with Triumph green.
Full in the Centre of theſe wondrous Works,
While Tombs of Heroes conſecrate the way,
The Pride of Earth! *Rome* in her Glory ſee!

Behold her Demigods, in Senate met;
All Head to counſel, and all Heart to act!
The Commonweal inſpiring every Tongue
With fervent Eloquence, *unbrib'd*, and *bold*;
Ere low *Corruption* taught the *Servile Herd*
To know a *Maſter*'s voice. Aſtoniſh'd, mark
Her Forum, earneſt, popular, and loud,
In trembling wonder hush'd, when the two * SIRES,
As they the *Private Father* greatly quell'd,
Stood up the *Public Fathers* of the State.
See Juſtice judging there in Human Shape.
Hark how with Freedom's voice it thunders high,
Or in ſoft murmurs ſinks to TULLY's tongue.
Her Tribes, her Cenſus fee, her Generous Troops,
Whoſe Pay was Glory, and whoſe beſt Reward

Free

* L. J. Brutus, *and* Virginius.

Free for their Country and for ME to die;
Ere Mercenary Murder grew a Trade.
Mark, as the purple Triumph waves along,
The higheſt Pomp and loweſt Fall of Life.
Her Feſtive Games, the School of Heroes, ſee;
Her Circus, ardent with contending Youth;
Her Streets, her Temples, Palaces, and Baths,
Full of fair Forms of Beauty's eldeſt born,
And of a Race by Plaſtic Virtue mark'd.
While Sculpture lives around, and *Aſian* Hills
Lend their beſt Stores to heave the pillar'd Dome;
All that to *Roman* Grandeur the ſoft Touch
Of *Grecian* Art can join. But Language fails
To paint this Sun, this Center of Mankind;
Where every Virtue, Glory, Treaſure, Art,

At-

Attracted ſtrong, in heighten'd luſtre met.

Need I the Contraſt mark? unjoyous View!

A Land in all, in Government, and Arts,

In Virtue, Genius, Heaven and Earth revers'd.

Who but theſe far-fam'd Ruins to behold,

Proofs of a People, whoſe heroic Aims

Soar'd far above the little ſelfiſh ſphere

Of doubting modern Life; who but inflam'd

With Claſſic Zeal, the conſecrated Scenes

Of Men and Deeds to trace, the Wonder, Theme,

And Model of Mankind; unhappy Land!

Would truſt thy Wilds, and Cities looſe of ſway?

Are theſe the Vales, that once exulting States

In their warm boſom fed? The Mountains theſe,

On whoſe high-blooming ſides my Sons of old

I bred to Glory? Theſe dejected Towns,
Sordid, and mean, where Life can ſcarce ſubſiſt,
The Scenes of Antient Opulence, and Pomp?
Come! by whatever *Sacred Name* diſguis'd,
OPPRESSION, come! and in thy works rejoice!
See Nature's richeſt Plains to putrid Fens
Turn'd by thy Rage. From their unchearful bounds
See raz'd th' enliv'ning Village, Farm, and Seat.
Firſt Rural Toil, by thy rapacious hand
Robb'd of his poor Reward, reſign'd the Plow;
And now he dares not turn the noxious Glebe.
'Tis thine intire. The lonely Swain himſelf,
Who loves at large along the graſſy Downs
His flocks to paſture, Thine abhorrent flies.
Far as the ſickening Eye can ſweep around,

'Tis all one Deſart, deſolate, and grey,
Graz'd by the ſullen Bufalo alone;
And where the rank unventilated Growth
Of rotting Ages taints the paſſing Gale.
Beneath the baleful Blaſt the City pines,
Or ſinks infeebl'd, or infected burns.
Beneath it mourns the ſolitary Road,
Roll'd in rude Mazes o'er th' abandon'd Waſte;
While Antient Ways, ingulph'd, are ſeen no more.
Such thy dire Plains, thou *Self-Deſtroyer!* Foe
To Human-kind! Thy Mountains too, profuſe
Where ſavage Nature blooms, ſeem their ſad plaint
To raiſe againſt thy deſolating Rod.
There on the breezy Brow, where thriving States,
And famous Cities once, to the pleas'd Sun,

Far other Scenes of riſing Culture ſpread,
Pale ſhine thy ragged Towns. Neglected round,
Each Harveſt pines; the livid, lean Produce
Of heartleſs Labour: while thy hated Joys,
Not proper Pleaſure, lift the lazy hand.
Better to ſink in Sloth the Woes of life,
Than wake their rage with unavailing Toil.
Hence drooping Art almoſt to Nature leaves
The rude, unguided Year. Thin wave the Gifts
Of yellow *Ceres*, thin the radiant Bluſh
Of Orchard reddens in the warmeſt ray.
To weedy wildneſs run, no Rural Wealth,
(Such as Dictators fed) the Garden pours.
Crude the wild Olive flows, and foul the Vine;
Nor Juice *Cæcubian*, nor *Falernian*, more

Streams Life, and Joy, ſave in the *Muſe*'s bowl.
Unſeconded by Art, the ſpinning Race
Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.
In vain, forlorn in wilds, the Citron blows;
And flowering Plants perfume the deſart gale.
Thro' the vile hedge the tender Myrtle twines.
Inglorious droops the Laurel, dead to Song,
And long a ſtranger to the Heroe's brow.
Nor half thy Triumph this: caſt from brute Fields
Into the Haunts of Men thy ruthleſs eye.
There buxom Plenty never turns her horn;
The Grace and Virtue of exterior Life,
No clean Convenience reigns; even Sleep itſelf,
Leaſt delicate of Powers, reluctant there
Lays on the Bed impure his heavy head.

Thy horrid Walk! dead, empty, unadorn'd,
See Streets whoſe Echos never know the voice
Of chearful Hurry, Commerce many-tongue'd,
And Art mechanic at his various task
Fervent employ'd. Mark the deſponding Race,
Of Occupation void, as void of Hope;
Hope the glad Ray, glanc'd from ETERNAL GOOD,
That Life enlivens, and exalts it's Powers,
With views of Fortune — Madneſs all to them!
By Thee relentleſs ſeiz'd their better Joys,
To the ſoft aid of cordial Airs they fly,
A kind Oblivion breathing o'er their Woes,
And Love and Muſic melt their Souls away.
From feeble *Juſtice* ſee how raſh *Revenge*,
Trembling, the Ballance ſnatches; and her Sword,

Fearful

Fearful himſelf, to venal Ruffians gives.
See where GOD's Altar nurſing Murder ſtands,
With the red touch of dark Aſſaſſins ſtain'd.
But chief let *Rome*, the mighty City! ſpeak
The full-exerted Genius of thy Reign.
Behold Her riſe amid the lifeleſs Waſte,
Expiring Nature all corrupted round;
While the lone *Tyber*, thro' the deſart Shore,
Winds his waſte ſtores, and ſullen ſweeps along.
Patch'd from my Fragments, in unſolid Pomp,
Mark how the Temple glares; and, artful dreſt,
Amuſive draws the ſuperſtitious Train.
Mark how the Palace lifts a lying front,
Concealing often, in magnific Jail,
Proud Want, a deep unanimated Gloom!

And often joining to the drear abode
Of Misery, whose melancholy walls
Seem its voracious Grandeur to reproach.
Within the City Bounds, the Desart see.
See the rank Vine o'er subterranean roofs,
Indecent, spread; beneath whose fretted gold
It once exulting flow'd. The People mark,
Matchless, while fir'd by me; to Public Good
Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,
Afraid of nothing but unworthy Life,
Elate with Glory, an Heroic Soul
Known to the Vulgar Breast: behold them now
A thin despairing Number, all subdu'd,
The Slaves of Slaves, by Superstition fool'd,
By Vice unman'd and a licentious Rule,

In

In Guile ingenious, and in Murder brave,
Such in one Land, beneath the ſame fair Clime,
Thy Sons, OPPRESSION, are; and ſuch were MINE.
Even with thy labour'd *State*, for whoſe vain ſhow
Deluded Thouſands ſtarve; all age-begrim'd,
Torn robb'd and ſcatter'd in unnumber'd Sacks,
And by the Tempeſt of two thouſand Years
Continual ſhaken, let my *Ruins* vie.
Theſe Roads that yet the *Roman* hand aſſert,
Beyond the weak repair of modern Toil;
Theſe fractur'd Arches, that the chiding Stream
No more delighted hear; theſe rich Remains
Of Marbles now unknown, where ſhines imbib'd
Each parent ray; theſe maſſy Columns, hew'd
From *Africk*'s fartheſt ſhore; one Granite all,

These Obelisks high-towering to the Sky,
Mysterious mark'd with dark *Egyptian* Lore;
These endless Wonders that this * *Sacred Way*
Illumine still, and consecrate to Fame;
These Fountains, Vases, Urns, and Statues, charg'd
With the fine stores of Art-compleating *Greece*.
From these too drawn, mine is thy every Boast:
Thy † BUONAROTIS, thy PALLADIOS mine;
And mine the fair Designs, that RAPHAEL's soul
O'er the live canvas emanating breath'd.

What would you say, ye Conquerors of Earth!
Ye *Romans!* could you raise the laurel'd Head;
Could you the Country see, with Seas of blood,
And the dread Toil of ages, won so dear;
Your Pride, your Triumph, your supreme Delight!

For

* *Via Sacra.*

† M. ANGELO BUONAROTI, PALLADIO, and RAPHAEL D'URBINO; the three great modern Masters in Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting.

For whoſe Defence oft, in the doubtful hour,
You ruſh'd with rapture down the gulph of Fate,
Of Death ambitious! till by awful Deeds,
Virtues, and Courage, that amaze Mankind,
The Queen of Nations roſe; poſſeſt of all
That Nature, Art, and Glory could beſtow:
What would you ſay, deep in the laſt Abyſs
Of Slavery, Vice, and unambitious Want,
Thus to behold her ſunk? Your crowded Plains,
Void of their Cities; unadorn'd your Hills;
Ungrac'd your Lakes; your Ports to Ships unknown;
Your lawleſs Floods, and your abandon'd Streams;
Theſe could you know? theſe could you love again?
Thy *Tibur*, HORACE, could it now inſpire
Content, Poetic Eaſe, and Rural Joy,

Soon

Soon burſting into Song: while thro' the Groves
Of headlong *Anio*, daſhing to the Vale,
In many a tortur'd Stream, you mus'd along?
* Yon wild retreat, where Superſtition dreams,
Could, TULLY, you your *Tuſculum* believe?
And could you deem yon naked Hills, that form,
Fam'd in old Song, the Ship-forſaken † Bay,
Your *Formian* Shore? Once the Delight of Earth,
Where Art and Nature, ever-ſmiling, join'd
On the gay Land to laviſh all their Stores;
How chang'd, how vacant, VIRGIL, wide around,
Would now your *Naples* ſeem? Diſaſter'd leſs
By black *Veſuvius* thundering o'er the Coaſt,
His midnight Earthquakes, and his mining Fires,

Than

* *Tuſculum* is reckoned to have ſtood at a Place now called *Grotta Ferrata*, a Convent of Monks.

† The Bay of *Mola* (anciently *Formiæ*) into which HOMER brings ULYSSES, and his Companions. Near *Formiæ* CICERO had a Villa.

Than by Deſpotic Rage: that inward gnaws,
A native Foe; a foreign, tears without.
First from your flatter'd Cæsars This begun;
Till houſeleſs ſpreads, at laſt, the * Syren Plain,
That the dire Soul of Hannibal diſarm'd;
And wrapt in Weeds the † Shore of *Venus* lies.
There *Baia* ſees no more the joyous Throng;
Her banks all beaming with the Pride of *Rome*:
No generous Vines now bask along the Hills,
Where ſport the Breezes of the *Tyrrhene* main:
With Baths and Temples mixt, no Villas riſe;
Nor, Art-ſuſtain'd amid reluctant Waves,
Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing Deep:

* *Campagna felice*, adjoining to *Capua*.

† The Coaſt of *Baia*; which was formerly adorned with the Works mentioned in the following Lines; and where amidſt many magnificent Ruins, thoſe of a Temple erected to *Venus* are ſtill to be ſeen.

No ſpreading Ports their ſacred Arms extend:
No mighty Moles the big intruſive Storm,
From the calm Station, roll reſounding back.
An almoſt total Deſolation ſits,
A dreary Stillneſs, ſad'ning o'er the Coaſt;
* Where, when ſoft Suns and tepid Winters roſe,
Rejoicing Crowds inhal'd the balm of Peace;
Where city'd Hill to Hill reflected blaze;
And where, with *Ceres*, *Bacchus* wont to hold
A genial Strife: Her youthful Form, robuſt,
Even Nature yields; by Fire, and Earthquake rent:
Whole ſtately Cities in the dark Abrupt
Swallow'd at once, or vile in rubbiſh laid,
A neſt for Serpents; from the red Abyſs

New

* All along this Coaſt, the antient *Romans* had their Winter retreats; and ſeveral populous Cities ſtood.

New Hills, exploſive, thrown; the *Lucrine* Lake
A reedy Pool; and all to *Cuma*'s Point,
The Sea recovering his uſurp'd Domain,
And pour'd triumphant o'er the bury'd Dome.

Hence, BRITAIN, learn; my beſt-eſtabliſh'd, laſt,
And more than GREECE, or ROME, my ſteady Reign;
The Land where, *King* and *People* equal bound
By guardian Laws, my fulleſt Bleſſings flow;
And where my jealous unſubmitting Soul,
The dread of Tyrants! burns in every breaſt:
Learn hence, if ſuch the miſerable fate
Of an heroic Race, the Maſters once
Of Humankind; what, when depriv'd of ME,
How grievous muſt be thine? In ſpite of Climes,
Whoſe Sun-enliven'd *Æther* wakes the Soul

To

To higher Powers; in ſpite of happy Soils,
That, but by Labour's ſlighteſt aid impell'd,
With Treaſures teem to thy cold Clime unknown;
If there deſponding fail the common Arts,
And ſuſtenance of life: could Life itſelf,
Or, heart-conſum'd, a Tyrant's rotten Pomp,
Subſiſt with thee? Againſt depreſſing Skies,
Join'd to full-ſpread Oppreſſion's cloudy Brow,
How could thy Spirits hold? where Vigour find,
Forc'd Fruits to tear from their unnative Soil?
Or every Harveſt ſtoring in thy Ports,
Profuſe of all, to plow the dreadful Wave?
Here paus'd the Goddess. By the Pauſe aſſur'd,
In trembling accents thus I mov'd my Prayer.
" Oh firſt, and moſt benevolent of Powers!

" Come

" Come from eternal Splendors, here on Earth,
" Againſt deſpotic Pride, and Rage, and Luſt,
" To ſhield Mankind; to raiſe them to aſſert
" The native Rights, and Honour of their Race:
" Teach me thy loweſt Subject, but in Zeal
" Yielding to none, the PROGRESS OF THY REIGN,
" And with a Strain from THEE enrich the *Muſe*.
" For thy proud Slave, alone; her Patron Thou,
" And great Inſpirer be! then will ſhe joy,
" Tho' narrow Life her Lot, and Private Shade:
" And when her *Venal Voice* ſhe barters vile,
" Or to thy open or thy ſecret Foes;
" May ne'er thoſe ſacred Raptures touch her more,
" By ſlaviſh Hearts unfelt! and may her Song
" Sink in oblivion with the nameleſs Crew!

" Vermin of State! to thy o'erflowing Light
" That owe their Being, yet betray thy Cauſe."

Then, condeſcending kind, the HEAVENLY POWER Return'd.— " What here, ſuggeſted by the Scene,
" I ſlight unfold, record, and ſing at home,
" In that bleſt Iſle, where (ſo we Spirits move)
" With one quick effort of my Will I am.
" There Truth, *unlicens'd*, walks; even Kings themſelves
" Invite her forth, the Monarchs of the Free!
" By that beſt Glory pierc'd, that God-like Joy,
" That gay Security, that Pride of Rule;
" When Men, not Slaves, when all-performing Love,
" Not ſluggiſh Hate, and faithleſs Fear, obey.
" Fix'd on my Rock, there an Indulgent Race
" O'er BRITONS wield the Scepter of the Heart:

" And,

" And, mixing Worth with Worth, the ROYAL PAIR
" To ſteady Juſtice yielding Goodneſs join.
" Nor ſets the Proſpect in this pleaſing view;
" While there, to finiſh what his Sires began,
" A PRINCE behold! for ME! who burns ſincere,
" Even with a Subject's Zeal. He my great Work
" Will Parent-like ſuſtain; and added give
" The Touch, the *Graces* and the *Muſes* owe.
" For BRITAIN's Glory ſwells his panting Breaſt;
" And *Antient Arts* He emulous revolves:
" His Pride to let the ſmiling Heart abroad,
" Thro' Clouds of Pomp, that but conceal the Man;
" To pleaſe his Pleaſure; Bounty his Delight;
" And all the Soul of TITUS dwells in Him."

Hail

Hail glorious Theme! But how alas! ſhall Verſe,
From the crude Stores of mortal Language drawn,
How faint and tedious, ſing, what, piercing deep,
The GODDESS flaſh'd at once upon my Soul:
For, clear Preciſion all, the Tongue of Gods
Is Harmony itſelf; to every Ear
Familiar known, like Light to every Eye.
Mean time diſcloſing Ages, as She ſpoke,
In dread Succeſſion pour'd their Empires forth;
Scene after Scene, the Human Drama ſpread;
And ſtill th'embody'd Picture ruſh'd to ſight.
Oh THOU! to whom the *Muſes* owe their flame;
Who bid'ſt beneath the Pole *Parnaſſus* riſe,
And *Hippocrenè* flow; with thy bold Eaſe
The ſtriking Force, the Lightning of thy Thought,

And thy ſtrong Phraſe, that rowls profound, and clear;
Oh gracious GODDESS! reinſpire my Song:
While I, to nobler than Poetic Fame
Aſpiring, thy Commands to BRITONS bear.

And thy ſtrong Thrale, that rowls profound, and clear;

Oh gracious GODDESS! reinſpire my Song:

While I, to nobler than Poetic Fame

Aſpiring, thy Commands to BRITONS bear.

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